NY TIMES MARCH 8, 1967

headline: CUBA CALLED BASE FOR SOVIET DRIVE
Dodd Group hears charge
-U.S. Officials Discount it.
by Benjamin Welles
special to the NY TIMES

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WAS HINGTON, MARCH 7-- A Senate Subcommittee was told today, that Soviet military technicians had"honeycombed Cuba with undergound sites for offensive missiles, aircraft hangers, ammunition dumps and even military hospitals.

This testimony was given by Paul Bethel, a former United States information officer at the embassy in Havana and now executive director of the privetely supported Citizens Committee for a Free Cuba. The group has headquarters here and in Miami.

The committee is described here as a right-of-center group, backed in part by wealthy Cuban refugees, whose policy is to keep alive the spirit of resistance to the Castro regime and to urge the United States Government to maintain a more militant stand toward Cuba generally.

Following Mr. Bethel's testimony, State Department and other Government sources who declined to be identified discounted his allegations of a continuing Soviet military build-up in Cuba.

Mr. Bethel charged that the Soviet Union was using Cuba as a base for world subversion.

16th in Series of Hearings

He testified for two and a half hours this morning as the first witness before the Senate subcommittee on Internal Security, which is headed by Senator Thomas Dodd, Democrat of Connecticut. The Subcommittee is holding the 16th in a series of hearings on the alleged communist threat to the United States through the Carribbean.

Mr. Bethel said that most of his information came from cuban refugees who had reached Miami, from published Cuban material and from private sources. He said that the Soviet Union was now in virtual control of Cuban's economy and was using Cuba as its base for world subversion.

He recalled the Tricontinental Solidarity Conference held in Havana in January, 1966 under the sponsorship of Premier Fidel Castro at which, he said, Havana was designated the base of Soviet subversion against Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

The conference was attended by 500 delegates from 82 movements in non-Communist countries. It established a Tricontinental Solidarity Organization, with headquarters in Cuba.

Pointing out that Cuba's terrain is pocketed with natural caves, Mr. Bethel asserted that several thousand Soviet Army technicians stationed in Cuba had extended and widened these Caves to house ammunition dumps, military hospitals, aircraft hangers for Soviet MIG-21 jet fighters and offensive long range missiles.

researched by David Zitch

PAUL BETHEL (CONTINUED) NY TIMES 3/8/67

Despite repeated efforts by J.G. Sourwine, committee Council to elicit specific designations or descriptions of such missiles by credible witnesses, Mr. Bethel, an articulate, well-dressed witness in his early 50's repeated that such identification was impossible to obtain.

"I cannot State categoridally that there are interdontinental ballistics missiles or intermediate range ballistics missiles in Cuba," he declared at one point. "But neither can the State Department state categorically that there aren't any. Why else would the Russians be developing these caves and tunnels and other installations?"

Senator Strom Thurmond, Democrat South Carolina, presided at the hearing during Senator Dodd's frequent absences.

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LOS ANGELES HERALD EXAMINER MARCH 8, 1967

headline:: DENY MORE SOVIET MISSILES IN CUBA

WASHINGTON, MARCH 8 (UPI)-Defense and State Department officials said today they were satisfied there are no long-range Soviet missiles in Cuba, despite the claims ofa former U.S. Foreign Service officer.

Paul D. Bethel who served as information officer at the U.S. Embassy in Havana during Fidel Castro's rise to power, told the Senate Internal Subcommittee Tuesday that the Russians never removed all their offensive missile from Cuba after the 1962 missile crisis and have since removed more of them in.

Bethel said Cuba now has nuclear strike potential from the concealment of caves and hundreds of miles of tunnels honeycombing the island.

Retired from government service, Bethel now is executive diredtor of the "Citizens' Committee For A Free Cuba," which supports the goal of Cuban exiles to retain their homeland. He lives in Miami and edits "Latin American Report," a newsletter which draws heavily on exile sources for its report on Cuba affairs.

U.S. officials replying to his missile claims, made these points today:

•Since Russia's big missiles were taken out of Cuba in November, 1962, on the decks of Soviet vessles, the United States has maintained regular reconnaissance of the island. This reconnaissance was said to be far more thorough than was maintained before the discovery of offensive missiles in October, 1962.

•The U.S. also interrogates refugees coming in from Cuba and maintains other intelligence sources.

•While Bethel claims eyewitness reports of missiles 60ft. long, United States Officials say that the wieght of their reports indicate missiles only about 30Ft. long, the antiaircraft SAMs (surface-to air missiles) which Russia gave Cuba before October, 1962 and which are still there.

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